BOROUGH OF CHIPPENHAM.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health,

FOR THE YEAR 1920.

To the Mayor and Members of the Chippenham Corporation :—

Report.

GENTLEMEN,

I have again the pleasure of presenting my Annual Report. The Report is compiled upon the lines indicated in the Memorandum, memo. $\frac{9}{Med}$ circular 168, issued by the Ministry of Health. It is arranged in sections which facilitates its examination.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The population was estimated previously to be 8006, but is now estimated to be 7757.

Physical Features.

Chippenham is an ancient country town, and was some years ago the centre and chief market for cheese, this market has now disappeared and is replaced by industries dealing with milk.

Trades.

There are now important trades carried on in the town, including Nestle's Milk Factory employing about 276 hands.

The ancient cloth factory, the producer of the celebrated cloths, which continues to prosper. A large iron foundry, employing a considerable number of men and boys. The Wiltshire Farmers are a Company handling a large amount of milk. A laundry and other smaller firms help to increase the population.

Altogether in prosperous times there would be some 1,200 or 1,400 workers requiring houses.

Vital Statistics.

The number of deaths was 70, the causes being as follows :—

CAUSES OF DEATH.	MALE	FEMALE
Whooping cough	...	3
Diphtheria and croup ...	...	1
Influenza	1	...
Pulmonary tuberculosis ...	...	2
Tuberculosis meningitis	1	...
Other tuberculous disease ...	1	1
Cancer, malignant disease ...	1	3
Organic heart disease ...	3	8
Bronchitis	5	3
Pneumonia (all forms) ...	1	...
Appendicitis and typhlitis ..	...	1
Cirrhosis of liver ...	1	1
Nephritis and Bright's disease ...	...	1
Congenital debility, etc. ...	3	1
Violence apart from suicide ...	2	...
Other defined diseases ...	13	13
Total	32	38

The death rate per 1000 of the population, 9·02.

Number of births 158, birth rate, 20·3.

Average death rate England and Wales, 12·4.

Average birth rate England and Wales, 25·4.

Infantile mortality, 1·53.

Poor Relief. The amount of poor law relief is £2,200.

There are no occupations or trades carried on in the town influencing puplic health.

There is a Cottage Hospital which is constantly full, also an Isolation Hospital for the treatment of infectious diseases.

Unemployment. There is some unemployment. There are amusements for young people, including dances, football, cricket, tennis and bowls clubs, all well attended.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Part of the town is built upon clay and part on the cornbrash and rock. The river Avon runs through the town, and its passage assists in the working of a large flour mill.

There are two or three portions of the town which may be classed as slums, they are constantly under the observation of your Surveyor.

Water Supply. There is an ample and constant supply of potable water, which is obtained from the great oolite formation. The fitters and aerators for the removal of iron continue to give complete satisfaction. The water is not liable to have plumbo-solvent action. There has been no form of contamination.

Rivers and Streams. There is practically no pollution of the river which flows through the centre of the town. There is no other watercourse of any importance if we except the Patterdown brook which discharges into the river below the town proper.

Drainage and Sewerage. Crude sewage is not allowed to flow into any of the streams or river.

The Patterdown Disposal works are about to be remodeled, in fact most of the old scheme is to be scrapped and a new scheme provided. Plans for this are now before the Ministry of Health.

Closet Accommdation. The whole of the closets are being gradually converted into efficient water closets. In the old Borough only four earth closets remain, and in the extended area a considerable number of insanitary middens and earth closets have been converted into W.C.'s.

Scavenging. The whole of the Borough is scavenged at least once a week and certain areas are visited twice and three times a week.

The Wilts and Berks Canal is being filled and makes an excellent tip

The General Purposes Committee have been considering other means of collection than by horse and cart.

Schools. The sanitary arrangements at the schools are inspected from time to time. At Lowden Church School improvements are to be made to the drainage, and prices have been obtained for converting the trough closets into single wash-down water closets. St. Paul's Schools has been thoroughly fumigated and sprayed with "Izal," on the instruction of the County Council.

FOOD.

Milk Supply. The milk supply is good, most of it is imported into the town and is distributed by retailers from house to house. In some instances your Council have arranged that milk be supplied for mothers and children free, or at a reduced price.

Other Foods. The slaughter houses have been inspected and found to be in fair condition, but they are for the most part old structures.

There are six slaughter houses registered, a like number were in use in 1914, 1920 and 1921.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Diphtheria is universally treated with Antitoxin, a supply of which is kept at the Isolation Hospital, and at 16 Market Place, for distribution among medical men requiring it for diagnosis or treatment, other Bacteriological aids to diagnosis are in constant use.

There were cases of Diphtheria in January, March, April, May, June and September, in all, nineteen cases.

There were cases of Scarlet Fever in January, February, March, May, June, September and November, in all, seventeen cases.

The schoolmasters of all the schools give me intimation of any suspicious cases of illness they observe amongst the scholars.

There were no vaccinations or re-vaccinations performed by me under the Public Health (small pox prevention) Regulations, 1917.

There are no facilities available in the district for the cleansing and disinfecting of virminous persons or their belongings.

Sixty-nine cases were notified.

Notifiable Cases.

19 cases of Diphtheria
1 case of Erysipelas
17 cases of Scarlet Fever
1 case of Puerperal Fever
17 cases of Phthisis
2 „ of Pneumonia
7 „ of Malaria
5 „ of Ophthalmia Neomatorium

There was no epidemic properly so called. This condition may be attributed to the general use that is made of the Isolation Hospital, nineteen cases of Diphtheria and sixteen cases of Scarlet Fever were removed and treated there. I have no reason to suppose that there was any "return" case among the Scarlatina cases.

Hospital.

During the year thirty-five patients were admitted into the Isolation Hospital, nineteen Diphtheria and sixteen Scarlatina. There was no deaths. The hospital is managed by a Joint Committee of the County Council and the Chippenam Urban and Rural District Councils. It has been suggested that the Urban and Rural Districts of Malmesbury should come in, the nursing staff is sufficient for this. Miss B. Mathews is still the matron, she is a qualified nurse, and has had extensive experience in fever wards.

The benefits of the Isolation Hospital are available for cases of Typhoid, Typhus, Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria. There is no provision for small pox.

In my opinion all cases of Tuberculosis are notified by the medical men in attendance.

Tuberculosis.

It is now customary to disinfect after all cases.

Sanitary Administration.

The Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Adams, is provided with a clerk.

Housing Conditions, General.

An inspector from the Bristol Housing Department has on four occasions visited this district and has examined the seventy-one houses which are reported as unfit for human habitation. The same inspector has also visited most houses which are not considered in all respects in a good sanitary condition. It is impossible to do much work under this heading as the Council are employing all available skilled workmen on their Housing Scheme at Ladyfield.

Housing Scheme.

A contract has been let for forty-two houses, twelve of these are occupied, and about thirty are roofed in. It is hoped to complete this scheme by the Autumn of this year, 1921.

I have the honour to remain Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

WILLIAM THOMAS BRISCOE, B.A., M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

APPENDICES.

HOUSING CONDITIONS.

STATISTICS.

Year ending 31st December, 1920.

1.—GENERAL.

(1)	Estimated population	7757
(2)	General death rate	9·02
(3)	Death rate from tuberculosis	0·64
(4)	Infantile mortality	1·53
(5)	Number of dwelling-houses of all classes	2000
(6)	Number of working-class dwelling-houses	1350
(7)	Number of new working-class dwelling-houses erected ...	14

2.—UNFIT DWELLING-HOUSES.

I.—Inspection.

(1)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	376
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 ...	160
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	71
(4)	Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	118

II.—Remedy of Defects without Service of formal Notices.

	Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	116

III.—Action under Statutory Powers.

A. *Proceedings under section* 28 *of the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act,* 1919.

(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	—
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit—	
	(*a*) by owners	—
	(*b*) by Local Authority in default of owners ...	—
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	—

B. *Proceedings under Public Health Acts.*

(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	118
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied—	
	(*a*) by owners	118
	(*b*) by Local Authority in default of owners ...	—